

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 6-19, 22 and 23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 15 and 16 are amended. No new matter is added by these amendments, as the allowable subject matter of claims 4, 5, 20 and 21 are incorporated into claims 1 and 2, and claims 15 and 16, respectfully. Reconsideration of the application based upon the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments place the application in condition for allowance by incorporating the allowable subject matter of claims 4, 5, 20 and 21 into independent claims 1, 2, 15 and 16, respectively. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action, in paragraph 4, states that claims 5, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 21 recite allowable subject matter. Specifically, these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant appreciates this indication of allowance, and bases the above amendments on this indication. Specifically, the subject matter of claims 4 and 5 are incorporated into claims 1 and 2, and the allowable subject matter of claims 20 and 21 are incorporated into claims 15 and 16, thereby placing this application in condition for allowance.


The Office Action, in paragraph 1, objects to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention. As argued in the December 8 Amendment, the Examiner indicated that the drawings fully support the claimed subject matter. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that this objection is obviated by the previously conducted personal interview.

The Office Action, in paragraph 3, rejects claims 1-4, 7, 9-11, 14-20, 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6, 859,193 to Yumoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,788,277 to Kanauchi et al. (hereinafter "Kanauchi"). The amendment of independent claims 1, 2, 15 and 16 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claims 4, 5, 15 and 16, respectively, obviates this rejection. Based on the assertions of the Office Action, this application is in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-3, 6-19, 22 and 23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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